

BLACK DIAMOND  
WESTERN

OCT.  
NO. 58

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CODE



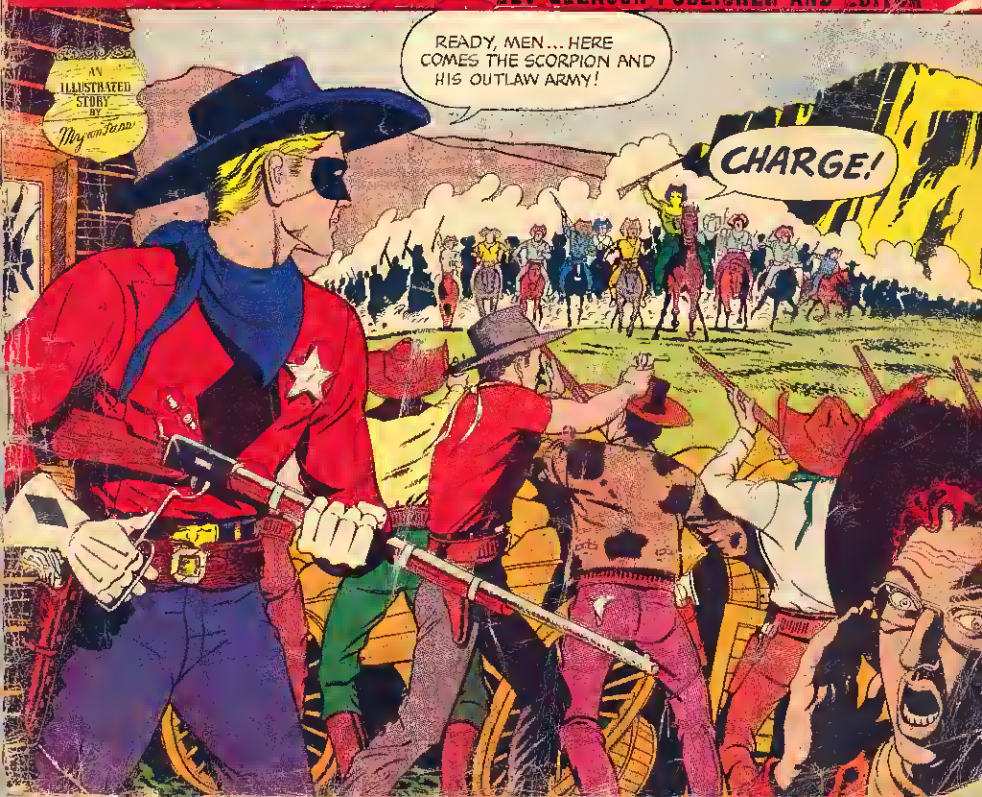
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# BLACK DIAMOND WESTERN

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Dime to start  
you off right.

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THE HISTORY OF THE WEST IS A GLORIOUS ONE, AND THE TERRIBLE CIVIL WAR MEANT DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE! TO THE SETTLERS, IT MEANT PESTILENCE, FAMINE, AND NEEDLESS BLOODSHED! BUT TO THE SCORPION AND HIS GUN-RAMMERS IT MEANT THE BEGINNING OF RICH PICKINGS OF THE BESIEGED TOWNS. COULD EVEN BLACK DIAMOND AND DAVY CROCKETT... FAMOUS LAW-FIGHTER WHOSE GUNS ONCE ENFORCED ORDER IN BULLET-RIDDEN FRONTIER TOWNS, SAVE THE WEST FROM THE SURPRISE...

FROM THE SURPRISE...

# RETURN of the SCORPION

LOOK OUT!  
IT'S COMING!

THAT BURNING  
WAGON'S HEADING  
STRAIGHT AT US!  
GET READY TO  
DUCK...AND FIGHT  
BACK!

LOOK OUT!  
IT'S GONNA  
CRASH!





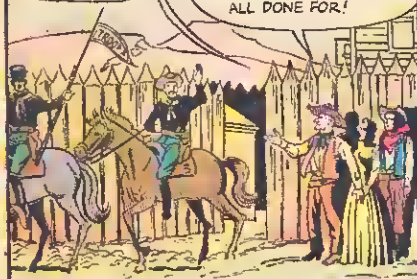
**T**HE BOMBARDMENT OF FORT SUMTER, IN THE HARBOR OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA BY THE CONFEDERACY OPENED THE CIVIL WAR ON APRIL 12, 1861.



**W**HEN THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT RECALLED ITS WESTERN GARRISONS, THE SETTLERS WERE LEFT UNPROTECTED AGAINST THE PERILS OF THE FRONTIER...

SO LONG, "LOUTENANT!"  
GUESS WE WON'T BE  
SEEHN' YOU AGAIN!

WE'LL BE AT THE MERCY OF  
EVERY OWNHOOOT IN THIS  
TERRITORY! I TELL YUH,  
WITHOUT THE ARMY, WE'RE  
ALL DONE FOR!



**W**ITHIN DAYS, THE SETTLEMENTS BECAME SCENES OF RIOTING AND TERROR! OUTLAWS, FIGURING THEY HAD HIT A BONANZA, ROBBED AND LOOTED...

OKAY, MISTER!  
RAISE YER  
HOOKS!

DON'T SHOOT! I'M  
UNARMED!



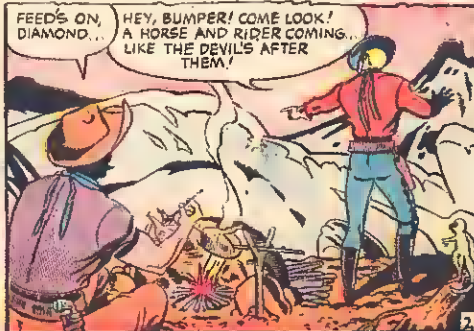
**A**ND STRUCK WANTONLY, AS THE SETTLERS WATCHED HELPLESS!



**M**EANWHILE, BLACK DIAMOND AND BUMPER BITTERLY FIGHT AGAINST THE OVERWHELMING ODDS. BUT IT WAS LIKE BATTLING AN UNCONTROLLABLE FOREST FIRE... AS SOON AS ONE GANG WAS DESTROYED... THREE MORE SPRANG UP IN ITS PLACE! AS DIAMOND MAKES CAMP IN A PRAIRIE WATER HOLE, HE SEES...

FEEDS ON,  
DIAMOND...

HEY, BUMPER! COME LOOK!  
A HORSE AND RIDER COMING...  
LIKE THE DEVILS AFTER  
THEM!

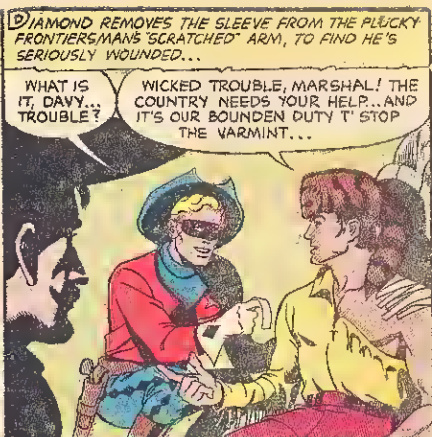




GREAT GONNIES!  
IT CAN'T  
BE!

BUT IT IS,  
BUMPER!  
IT'S DAVY  
CROCKETT!

HOWDY, FRIENDS!  
DIDN'T THINK YOU'D  
READ MY BRAND...  
THE WAY I'M  
SCRATCHED UP...



WHAT IS  
IT, DAVY...  
TROUBLE?

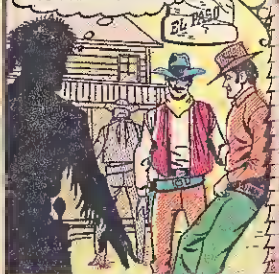
WICKED TROUBLE, MARSHAL! THE  
COUNTRY NEEDS YOUR HELP...AND  
IT'S OUR BOUNDEN DUTY T' STOP  
THE VARMINT...



T' STOP HIM FROM  
RECRUITIN' AN OUTLAW  
ARMY 'CROSS THE RIO  
GRANDE IN MEXICO!

"...ON MY WAY TO JOIN GEN'L GRANT'S  
ARMY, I STOPPED OFF FOR A SPELL IN  
THE TOWN OF EL PASO. THERE WAS A  
FEELIN' OF TENSION LYING LIKE AN AP-  
PROACHING TORNADO OVER THE WHOLE  
PLACE! ONLOOKERS WERE GATHERIN' IN  
THE STREETS BY THE HUNDREDS..."

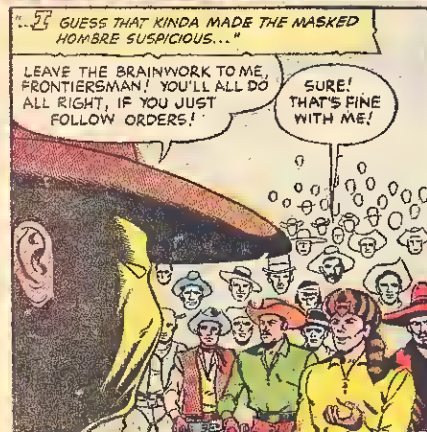
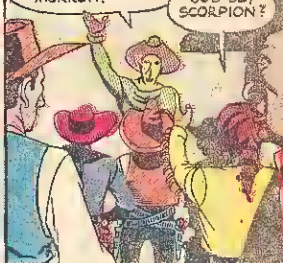
'PEARS LIKE FOLKS ARE  
WAITIN' FOR SOMETHIN'  
TO HAPPEN!



"THAT EVENIN' I MINGLED WITH THEM  
TO MEET THE LEADER...AN HOMBRE  
CALLED THE SCORPION!..."

"...AND WE'LL LOOT AND SACK  
EVERY TOWN IN THE WEST! WITH  
THE COUNTRY AT WAR, THERE'S  
NOTHING TO STOP US!  
THERE'LL BE UNTOLD  
GAINS FOR ALL OF  
YOU! WE RIDE TO-  
MORROW!"

WHERE'LL  
OUR FIRST  
JOB BE,  
SCORPION?



"...I GUESS THAT KINDA MADE THE MASKED  
HOMBRE SUSPICIOUS..."

LEAVE THE BRAINWORK TO ME,  
FRONTIERSMAN! YOU'LL ALL DO  
ALL RIGHT, IF YOU JUST  
FOLLOW ORDERS!

SURE!  
THAT'S FINE  
WITH ME!

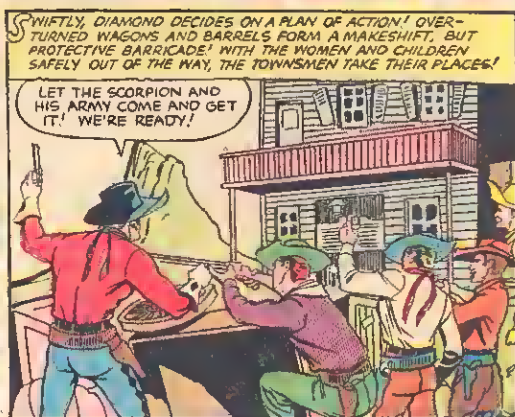
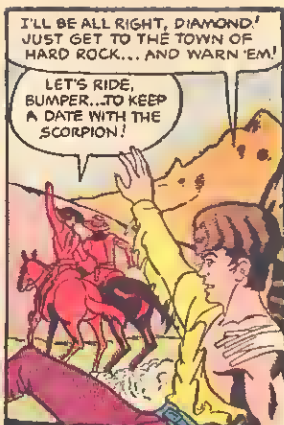
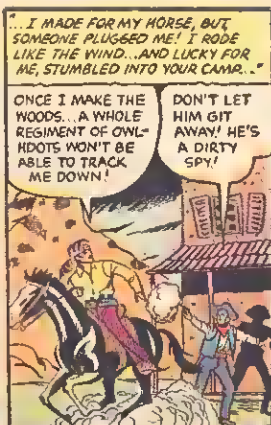


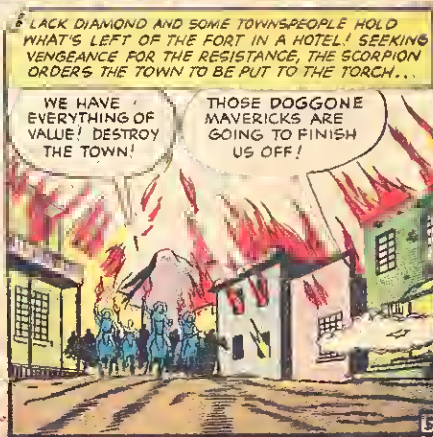
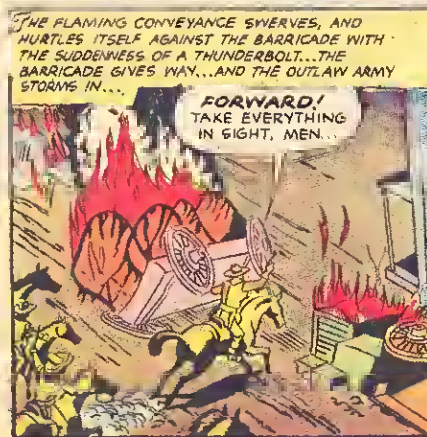
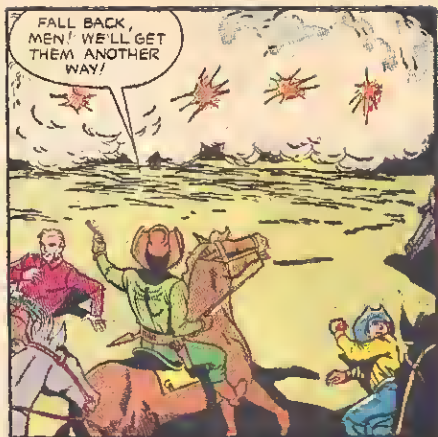
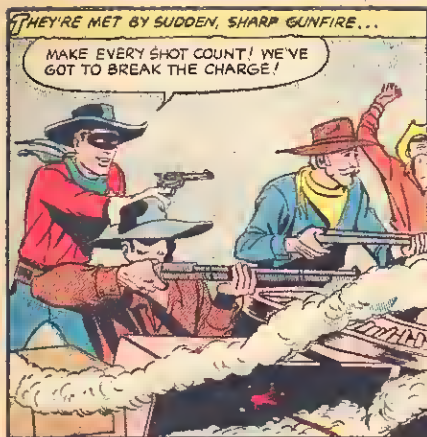
"...CAUSE WHEN I TRIED TO OVERHEAR THEIR  
PLANS..."

...AFTER  
WE TAKE  
HARD  
ROCK, WE...

STRANGER, IT'S PLUMB RUDE  
AND DANGEROUS TO EAVESDROP  
THAT WAY! I GUESS THE  
SCORPION WAS RIGHT, HAVIN'  
YOU WATCHED! GRAB SKY...!









LIKE A HORDE OF LOCUSTS WITH THEIR APPETITES SATIATED, THE GANG LEAVES... AND IN THEIR WAKE, DESTRUCTION AND DEATH...

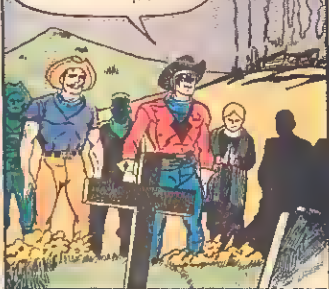
NOTHING LEFT OF THE TOWN... BUT THE HOTEL WHERE WE MADE OUR LAST STAND!

MY POOR SON! WOUNDED... FOR NO REASON...



WITH HEAVY HEARTS, THE TOWN OF HARD ROCK BURIES ITS DEAD... AND BLACK DIAMOND MAKES A SOLEMN VOW OVER THE FRESH GRAVES...

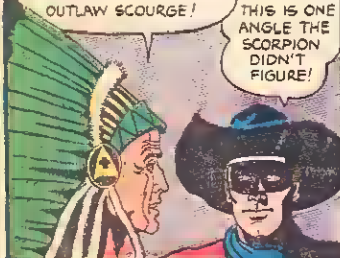
I'LL STOP THOSE OWLHOOTS!



LATER THAT DAY, A WEARY, BUT DETERMINED BLACK DIAMOND ORGANIZES THE SETTLERS. BUT, DESPITE THEIR COURAGE, SUPERIOR NUMBERS WILL TELL... SO DIAMOND SEEKS AID FROM HIS OLD FRIEND, GRAY EAGLE, CHIEF OF THE SHOSHONE...

MY PEOPLE WILL JOIN THE PALEFACES, TO RID OUR LAND OF THE OUTLAW SCOURGE!

THIS IS ONE ANGLE THE SCORPION DIDN'T FIGURE!

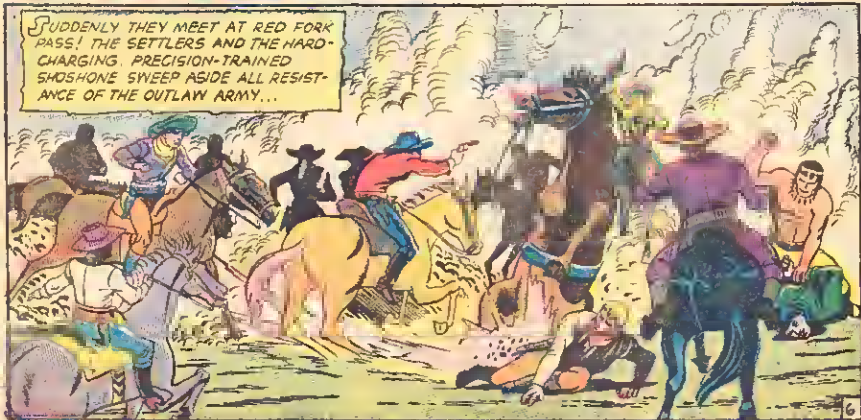


HE SETTLERS AND THE INDIANS MAKE A FORMIDABLE FOE! TOGETHER, THEY RELENTLESSLY TRACK THE SCORPION... FOLLOWING HIS TRAIL OF PLUNDER...

WE'LL GET HIM BUMPER! ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS CROSS THIS VALLEY AND RUSH HIM!

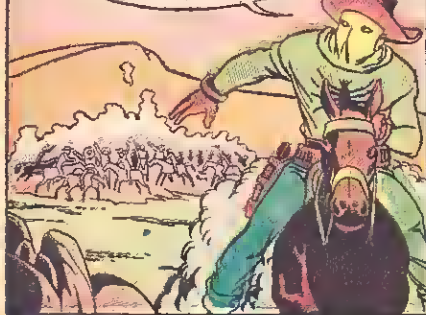


SUDDENLY THEY MEET AT RED FORK PASS! THE SETTLERS AND THE HARD-CHARGING, PRECISION-TRAINED SHOSHONE SWEEP ASIDE ALL RESISTANCE OF THE OUTLAW ARMY...



TRAPPED, THE OUT-NUMBERED AND OUT-GUNNED  
OWLHOOTS FIGHT A LOSING BATTLE...

I CAN'T FIGHT THE  
WHOLE BLINKING WEST!  
I'M CLEARING OUT OF  
HERE!



AS BLACK DIAMOND AND BUMPER INSPECT THE  
PRISONERS...

THE SCORPION'S GONE! IF  
HE ESCAPES IT MAY BE WEEKS  
BEFORE WE GET ANOTHER  
CHANCE AT HIM! WE'VE  
GOT TO FIND HIM!



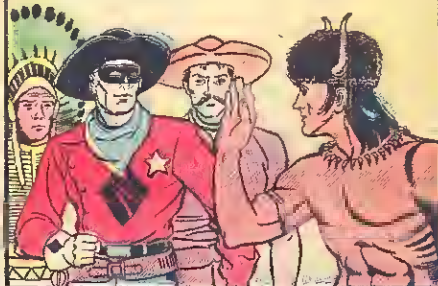
AN INDIAN BRAVE PICKS UP THE TRAIL OF THE  
OUTLAW CHIEF AND HIS TWO GUN-  
HAMMERS!

HIM HIDING OUT  
IN BARN! MUST  
REPORT THIS TO  
LAWMAN!



IN A BARN...? I SMELL  
A TYPICAL SCORPION  
TRICK! BUT, IF HE WANTS  
TO PLAY HIDE-AND-SEEK,  
I'LL PLAY WITH HIM!

THIS  
TIME...  
HE NO  
GET  
AWAY!



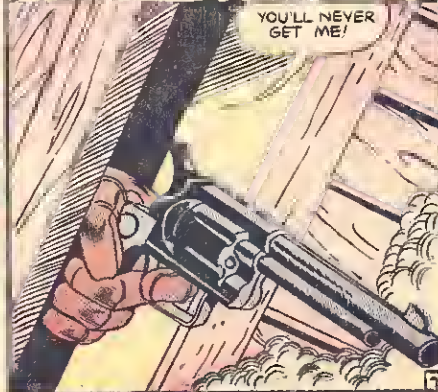
QUICKLY, THE BARN IS SURROUNDED...

C'MON OUT WITH YOUR  
HANDS UP, SCORPION! I'M  
GIVING YOU MORE OF A  
CHANCE THAN YOU GAVE  
THE PEOPLE AT HARD  
ROCK!

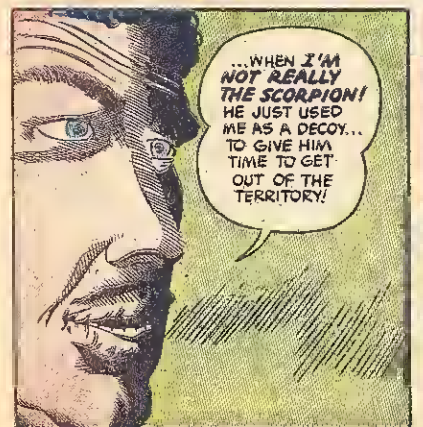


A BURST OF GUNFIRE IS THE ONLY ANSWER...

YOU'LL NEVER  
GET ME!







# Bullets and Ballots

ONE OF OUR RIGHTS AS CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT LAND IS SELECTING OUR OFFICIALS BY OPEN PUBLIC ELECTIONS! BUT THERE ARE RUTHLESS MEN WHO LIVE OUTSIDE THE LAW, WHO HOPE TO TAKE OVER PUBLIC OFFICE FOR THEIR OWN DISHONEST PURPOSES! WHEN LUCKY CARSON, AN HOMRE WITHOUT A CONSCIENCE, TRIES TO CONTROL A TOWN AND TELL FOLKS WHO THEY CAN AND CAN'T VOTE FOR, THAT'S WHERE BLACK DIAMOND LENDS A HAND TO STOP THE EVIL FORCES OF LAWLESSNESS!

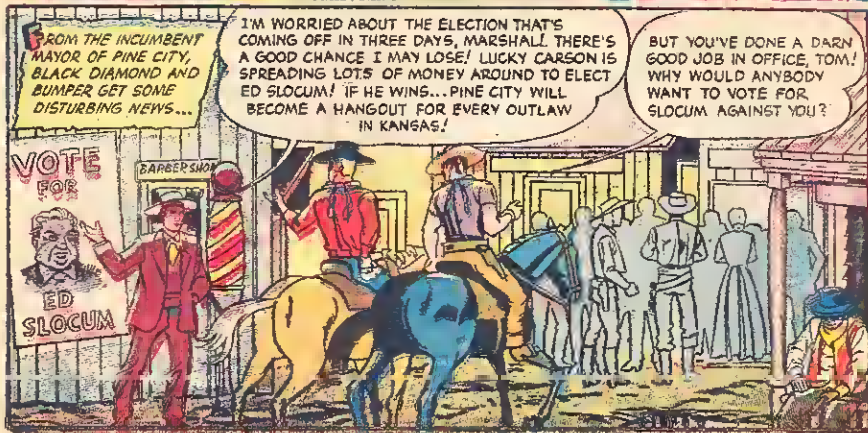
HMMMPHHH! THOSE MAVERICKS NEVER SAY ANYTHING, BUT IF YUH DON'T VOTE FOR THEIR CANDIDATE, SOMETHIN' MEAN ALWAYS HAPPENS TO YUH...AFTERWARDS!



FROM THE INCUMBENT MAYOR OF PINE CITY, BLACK DIAMOND AND BUMPER GET SOME DISTURBING NEWS...

I'M WORRIED ABOUT THE ELECTION THAT'S COMING OFF IN THREE DAYS, MARSHALL. THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE I MAY LOSE! LUCKY CARSON IS SPREADING LOTS OF MONEY AROUND TO ELECT ED SLOCUM! IF HE WINS...PINE CITY WILL BECOME A HANGOUT FOR EVERY OUTLAW IN KANSAS!

BUT YOU'VE DONE A DARN GOOD JOB IN OFFICE, TOM! WHY WOULD ANYBODY WANT TO VOTE FOR SLOCUM AGAINST YOU?





IN FRONT OF THE TOWN HALL...

CARSON BROUGHT IN A GANG OF GUNSLINGERS TO INTIMIDATE FOLKS WHO WON'T GO ALONG WITH HIS MAN! SLOCUM'S MAKING HIS PHONEY SPEECHES NOW!

...AND WHEN I'M ELECTED, I'M GOING TO BUILD NEW SCHOOLS... ROADS...



I TELL YOU THIS WILL BE THE BIGGEST LITTLE TOWN IN THE WHOLE WEST!

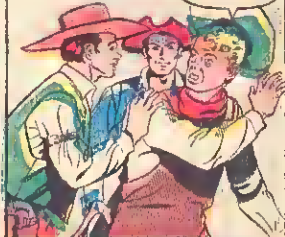
WAIT UP, SLOCUM! WHERE WILL YOU GET THE MONEY TO BUILD THESE THINGS?

SHUT THAT YOKEL'S BIG MOUTH! HE'S ASKIN' TOO MANY QUESTIONS!



A WISE HOMBRE, EH? TRYIN' TO BUST UP A POLITICAL MEETIN'! YOU BETTER SHUT UP AND JUST LISTEN!

I'M ENTITLED TO ASK QUESTIONS, BUT I RECKON THIS IS NO PLACE FOR ME...



THE CANDIDATE AIN'T THROUGH WITH HIS SPEECH YET! IT AIN'T POLITE TO LEAVE! I RECKON WE'LL JUST HAVE TO LEARN THIS HICK SOME MANNERS!

HEY! TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME!

IT'S TIME WE TOOK A HAND IN THIS BUMPER!



LEAVE THAT MAN ALONE, VARMINTS!

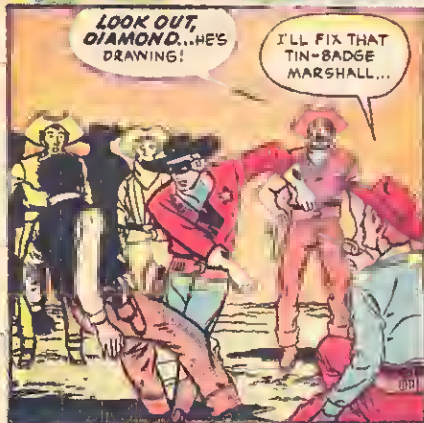
LET ME AT HIM! I'LL BREAK HIS... OOOFF!

ANOTHER HICK THAT NEEDS A LESSON IN MANNERS!

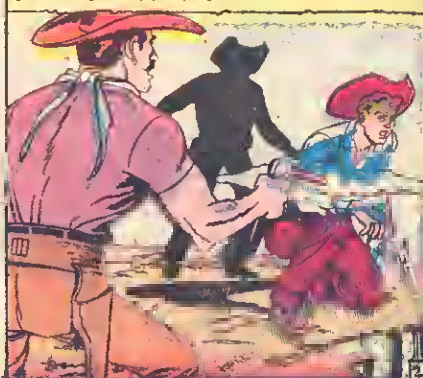


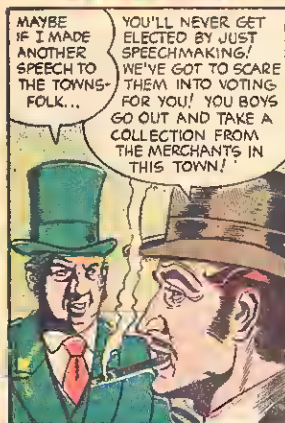
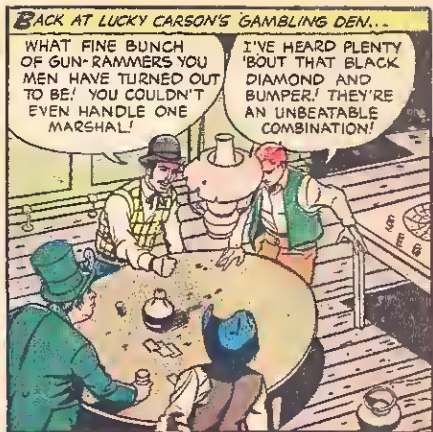
LOOK OUT, DIAMOND...HE'S DRAWING!

I'LL FIX THAT TIN-BADGE MARSHALL...



AS THE GUNMAN STARTS FOR HIS HOLSTER, BUMPER DRAWS AND...







**SWIFTLY, LUCKY CARSON LEAPS TO THE PLATFORM...**

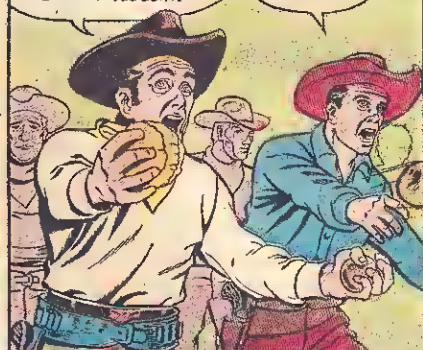
THERE'S A LOT OF OWLHOOTS HEADING FOR THIS TOWN JUST BECAUSE HAWKINS IS IN OFFICE! THEY'RE NOT SCARED OF HIM! HE'S TAKING ORDERS FROM THEM! I TELL YOU TO ELECT SLOCUM AND MAKE THE OWLHOOTS STAY OUT OF TOWN!

THAT'S AN ORNERLY LIE! WE NEVER HAD OUTLAWS HERE BEFORE YOU BROUGHT THEM IN!



GET OFF THAT PLATFORM, HAWKINS! WE DON'T WANT TO HEAR YOUR HOGWASH! WE WANT SLOCUM!

**BOOOO!!**

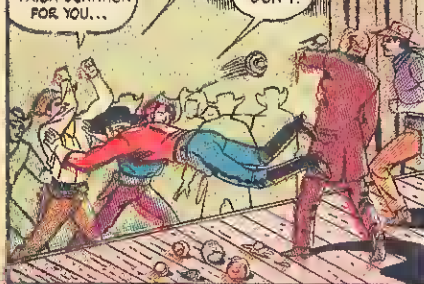


**LIKE AN UNCOILING SPRING, BLACK DIAMOND EXPLODES INTO MOTION TO STILL THE TROUBLE-MAKERS...**

HEY, MAYOR! HERE'S A LITTLE CAMPAIGN DONATION FOR YOU...

**BOOOO!** LET 'EM HAVE IT, BOYS!

NO YOU DON'T!



THIS IS ONE MEETING YOU'RE NOT BREAKING UP!

C'MON! LET'S HELP DIAMOND THROW THOSE VARMINTS OUT!



**AS THE HONEST TOWN'S PEOPLE JOIN IN THE FRACAS...**

PLOW INTO 'EM! WE'VE GOT 'EM LICKED!

I'M GETTIN' OUTA HERE!



**THE OWLHOOTS ARE SOON ROUTED AND ORDER IS RESTORED!**

MARSHAL... COME UP HERE AND SAY A FEW WORDS!

IF THIS TOWN IS GOING TO BE SAFE FOR LAW ABIDING CITIZENS, YOU MEN WILL HAVE TO FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS! I'M ASKIN' FOR VOLUNTEERS!

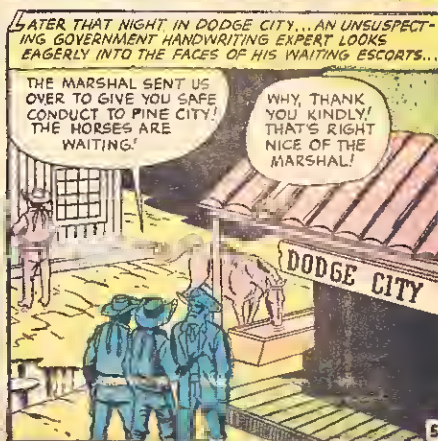
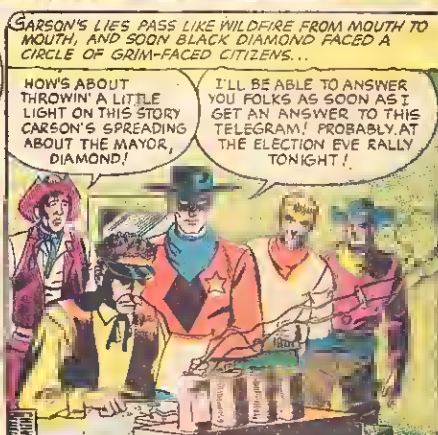
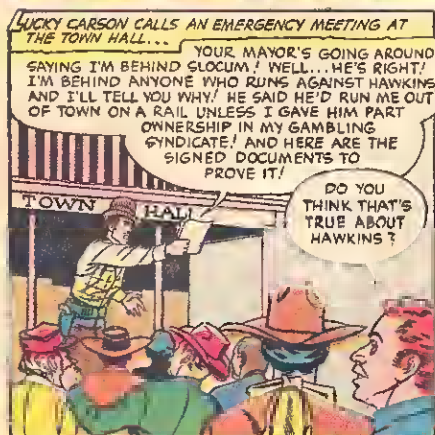


**THE FOLLOWING DAY, THE CITIZENS' COMMITTEE GOES INTO ACTION WITH BLACK DIAMOND AND BUMPER TO LEAD THEM!**

YOU DIDN'T BRING YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SLOCUM CAMPAIGN FUND, SO...! HUH!

DROP THOSE HOGLEGS, OWLHOOTS! DROP 'EM AND HIGHTAIL OUT OF HERE!

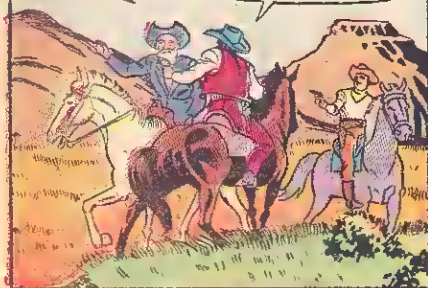






YOU BOYS ARE GOING THE WRONG WAY! THIS ROAD DOESN'T LEAD TO PINE CITY!

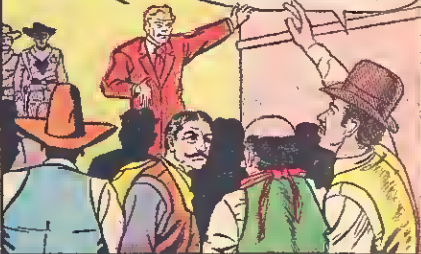
WELL, AIN'T THAT A TERRIBLE MISTAKE! NOW SHUT UP GOVERNMENT MAN, OR I'LL SHUT YOU UP PERMANENTLY! LET'S GO, LEM! WE'VE GOT TO GET HIM TO CABLE PASS!



BACK AT THE ELECTION EVE RALLY, THE BIG CROWDED ROOM HAD BEEN SILENT WITH EXPECTATION.

THE HANDWRITING EXPERT SHOULD HAVE BEEN HERE ALREADY! WHERE IS HE?

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU PEOPLE? DON'T YOU KNOW THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAN FROM DODGE CITY WILL NEVER GET HERE... HAWKINS WON'T LET HIM... HE KNOWS I TOLD YOU THE TRUTH!



THAT VARMIN'T HAS THE FOLKS ALL CONFUSED AGAIN!

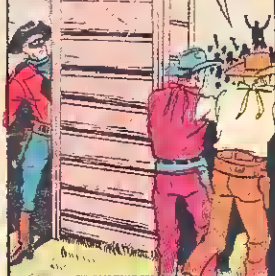
SOMETHING MUST HAVE GONE WRONG LET'S MOSEY OUTSIDE AND HAVE A LOOK AROUND!

CARSON MIGHT BE RIGHT!



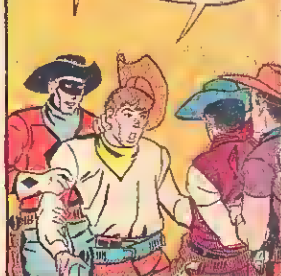
LOOK AT 'EM ALL WAITING!

THEY'RE SURE GOING TO WAIT A LONG TIME... BECAUSE THE HANDWRITIN' MAN AIN'T SHOWIN' UP HERE TONIGHT!



OKAY, VARMIN'TS! START TALKING FAST! HOW COULD YOU KNOW HE WAS NOT GOING TO SHOW UP?

D... DON'T HIT ME! I'LL TALK PLENTY! CARSON HAD THE BOYS TAKE THE GOVERNMENT MAN OUT TO CABLE PASS!



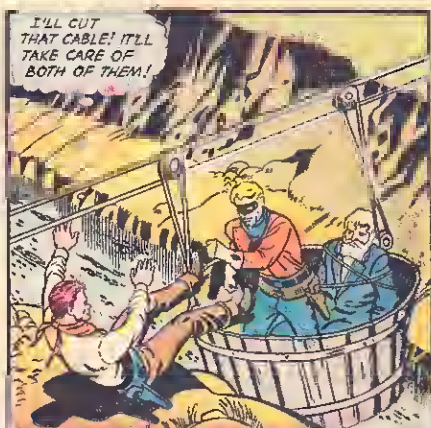
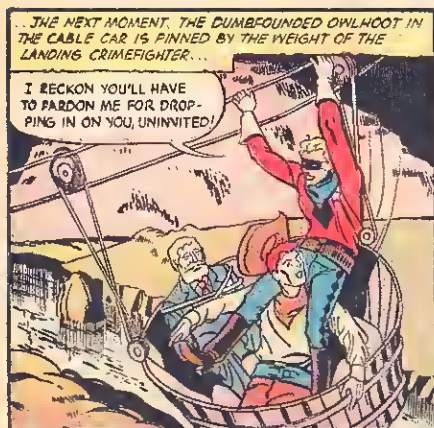
AN HOUR LATER, DIAMOND ARRIVES AT THE PASS.

NOW TO GET TO THAT CABLE CAR ON THE OTHER SIDE! BUT IF I MOVE IT, THEY'LL HEAR ME!

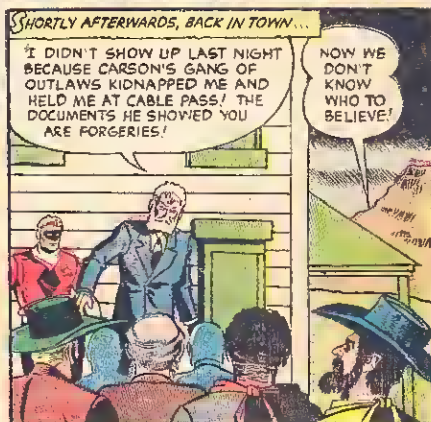


THE BATTLING MARSHAL'S STRATEGY IS CLEAR WHEN HE CLIMBS ON TO THE CABLE WITH ONLY A SLENDER ROPE HOLDING HIM UP.





LUCKILY, DIAMOND AND THE GOVERNMENT MAN SCRAMBLE ON TO A LEDGE BEFORE THE CAR PLUNGES INTO SPACE...



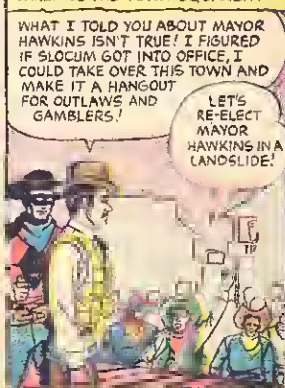
BLACK DIAMOND KNOWS THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO CLEAR UP THE TOWN'S CONFUSION... AND SO, HE HEADS FOR LUCKY CARSON'S GAMBLING PALACE! AS CARSON AND HIS MEN COME CHARGING OUT...



THE OUTLAWS START TO DRAW, BLACK DIAMOND'S GUNS SWEEP UP... THERE IS THE DULL THUD OF FALLING WEAPONS. WITH SMOOTH PRECISION, THE MARSHAL MOVES EFFORTLESSLY TO ACTION AND FIRES...



ON THE WAY TO JAIL, CARSON IS TAKEN TO THE TOWN SQUARE...





# THIEVES' END at GASPER GULCH

## by "THE BLACK DIAMOND"



It was in the early summer of 1878, when Bumper and I, along with the help of Chief Young Crazy Fox, rounded up one of the cruelest and tightest little bands of cattle thieves ever to operate in Wyoming, before or after.

It's quite a mystery and story. I don't think we would have had any success at all if it weren't for our friend, Chief Young Crazy Fox, leader of a small group of Pawnees.

Around the little settlement of Five Sleep, stretching for miles in every direction, were some of the biggest cattle ranches of that period. Although there was an awful lot of dry desert in the area, there were miles of green and fertile grazing fields and enough water to keep the cattle from stampeding.

There wasn't much law and order in that part of the country. In fact, there wasn't any except what the ranchers took into their own hands. But there were plenty of cattle thieves, bandits, bold-up men and whatnot. There weren't any courts because there was no law and there were no judges. There weren't any bank robbers because there were no banks. There were no stagecoach robbers because none of the stagecoaches carried any gold, because there were no mines.

Just cattle — enormous herds of fine steers, strong enough and fat enough to be driven 800 miles to market and bring a fancy price.

The marauders in the area concentrated on stealing cattle, whole herds of 500 to 1,000 steers at a time. I was asked to break up the gang. This was a tough job, considering we had no help — just the two of us — Bumper and I.

While we were talking over the problem in the parlor of Mrs. Fay's Boarding House, a young Indian burst in to welcome us and say hello. He was Chief Young Crazy Fox, son of one of my best and oldest friends, the Pawnee Chief Thunder Gulch.

After greetings were exchanged, I outlined to Chief Young Crazy Fox our problem. He was very interested, offered his cooperation and suddenly came up with a most unusual idea.

Here was the plan. He would gather together a small party of his braves, pretend to attack the cattle thieves, then turn and run, hoping that the thieves would follow. "If the plan worked," he said, "and they followed, he would lead the rustlers down into Gasper Gulch."

At first, I didn't get the point at all. Of course, I didn't know the area very well. I never even heard of Gasper Gulch. And there are some strange workings of nature that are hard to believe, unless you see them with your own eyes. Who would have believed stories of the great geysers, of boiling mudflats or a great inland lake so salty that one could *not* sink in its waters! Who would have believed the story of Gasper Gulch, another baffling phenomenon of nature!

But I took the word of Chief Young Crazy Fox, and Bumper and I, together with a couple of ranchers from Five Sleep, rode out to the edge of Gasper Gulch and awaited developments, according to plan.

All of these murderous thieves certainly had it coming to them, but had I known their fate, bad as they were, I might have hesitated. All Chief Young Crazy Fox told me was to ride to the edge of the gulch and wait, but under no circumstances to descend into the valley.

After an hour or so, we saw a great cloud of dust across the plain, and then a bunch of Indians riding directly towards us. In pursuit were more than 30 horsemen, the cattle thieves who had been decoyed by Chief Young Crazy Fox and his braves. On and on they came, thundering hoofs that could be heard for miles around. The rustlers were firing from time to time, but the pace was so fast that their aim was poor. Suddenly, the Indians came right up to the gulch and down they went. Instantly however, they made a sharp turn and rode out single file into a narrow tunnel passageway.

Seconds later, the rustlers poured into the gulch and then stopped to look around for the Indians. They could see no exit. They felt that they were trapped, as one by one they fell off their horses onto the ground, just as if shot.

While Bumper and I were marveling at this strange happening, Chief Young Crazy Fox and his men rode up from behind us and told us that all of the bandits were dead by now. "You see," Black Diamond, "this gulch is a freak of nature," said Chief Young Crazy Fox. "There is almost no air in the gulch to breathe. Ten minutes trapped in this gulch and any human being will die from suffocation. Only those who know the secret exit can ride into the gulch and out and live."

Suddenly, Chief Young Crazy Fox gave a signal to his men and they again rode hard into the gulch. There was nothing I could do to stop them. Chief Young Crazy Fox stayed behind. He told us that if they rode fast enough, they could gather up the horses and lead them into the tunnel to safety. As he spoke, they were gathering up the panting horses and pulling them into the tunnel.

"This is a terrible thing," I told the Chief. "What about those humans?"

"They were bad men," he replied. "They deserve to die. That is, according to our Code, and it is we who did it. We have done it for you, but you can have no blame. There are no more cattle thieves anywhere in this part of the territory. The ranchers, their wives and children are safe."

What caused the lack of oxygen in the air at Gasper Gulch? No one has ever found out the cause of this phenomenon. But then what is the answer to so many other mysteries of nature?



'OH, GIVE ME A HOME WHERE THE BUFFALO ROAM' GOES THE SONG. LISTENING TO THAT KIND OF MUSIC, YOU MIGHT GET THE IDEA THAT ALL WAS PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY OUT IN THE OPEN SPACES AMONG THE TUMBLEWEED AND HILLS. RED FIRE THOUGHT SO TOO UNTIL THE DAY HE CROSSED PATHS WITH THE MASON BROTHERS... TWO OF THE MEANEST DRY GULCHERS YOU EVER WANT TO MEET UP WITH. RIDE THEN WITH RED FIRE AND SEE WHY HE SET OUT IN GRIM PURSUIT OF THE RUTHLESS OUTLAWS AND FINALLY GOT HIS...

# REVENGE at BLACK ROCK'



EARLY ONE SUNDAY MORNING AS RED FIRE WAS HEADING FOR THE RANCH OF HIS FRIEND JIM BRACKEN, WHO HAD INVITED HIM FOR DINNER.



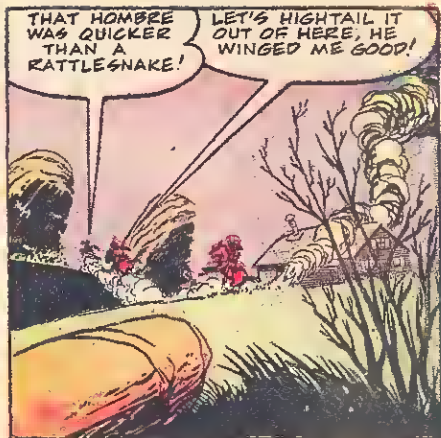
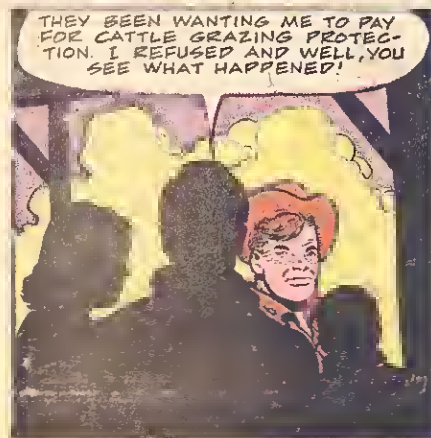
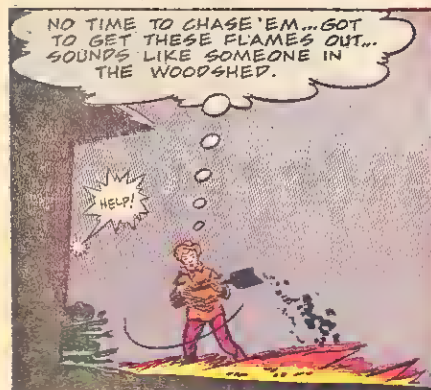
HOLD ON THERE! GET THAT FIRE OUT, PRONTO!



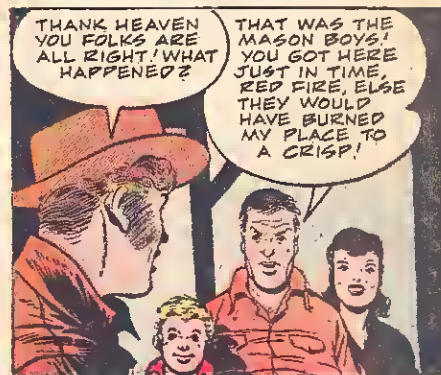
RED FIRE



AS RED FIRE PUTS OUT THE FLAMES...

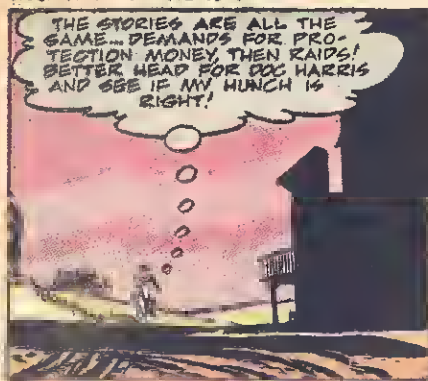


... HE HEARS A CRY FROM THE WOODSHED AND RELEASES HIS FRIENDS THE BRACKEN FAMILY.

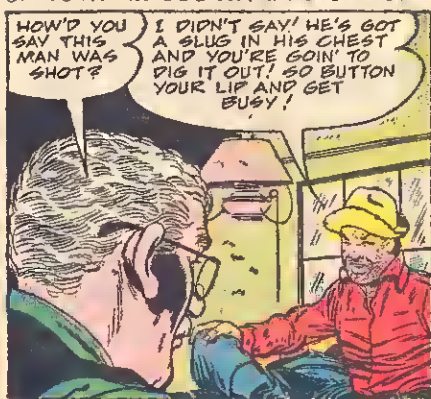




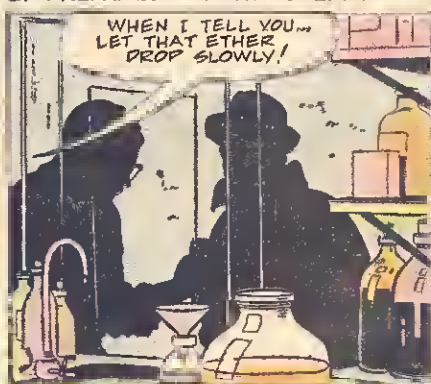
A SHORT WHILE LATER AFTER VISITING SEVERAL RANCHERS ON HIS WAY TO BLACK ROCK



MEANWHILE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN IN DOC HARRIS' OFFICE



DOC HAD NO CHOICE SO HE SWIFTLY PREPARED FOR THE OPERATION

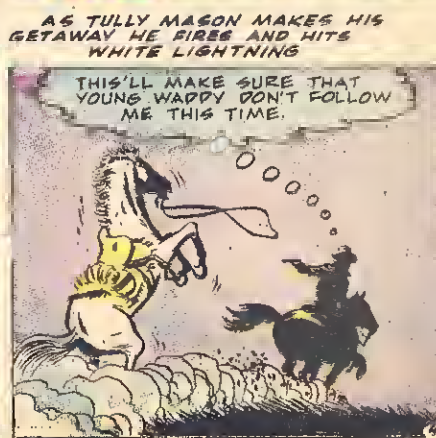
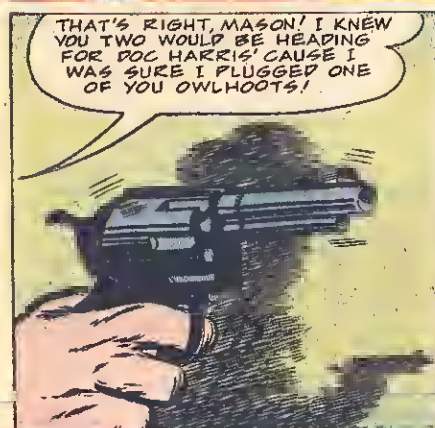


THE MOMENTS PASS ON...



... AND WITH THEM THE LIFE OF THE DYING OUTLAW!







BY THUNDER ... THAT ONERY GUNHAWK GUNNED WHITE LIGHTNING DELIBERATELY!

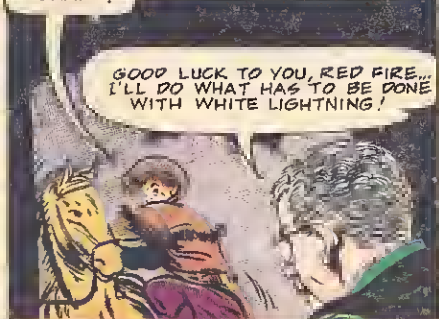
WHITE LIGHTNING'S LEG IS BROKE, RED FIRE! THAT SIDEWINDER WANTED TO MAKE SURE YOU DIDN'T FOLLOW HIM!



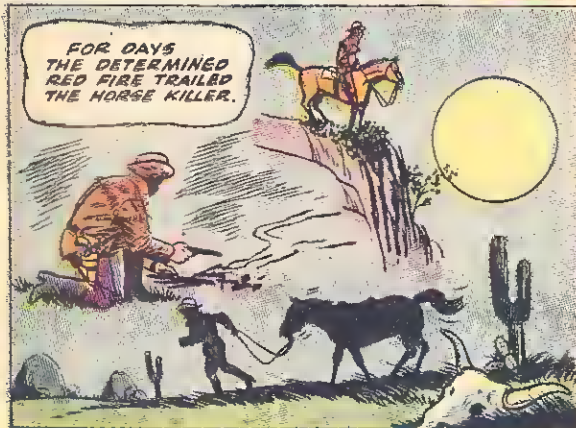
DOC HARRIS VOLUNTEERED TO GIVE HIS PINTO TO RED FIRE SO THAT HE COULD TAKE UP THE TRAIL OF THE RUTHLESS TULLY MASON.

I'LL CATCH UP WITH THAT RATTLE-SNAKE!

GOOD LUCK TO YOU, RED FIRE... I'LL DO WHAT HAS TO BE DONE WITH WHITE LIGHTNING!



FOR DAYS THE DETERMINED RED FIRE TRAILED THE HORSE KILLER.



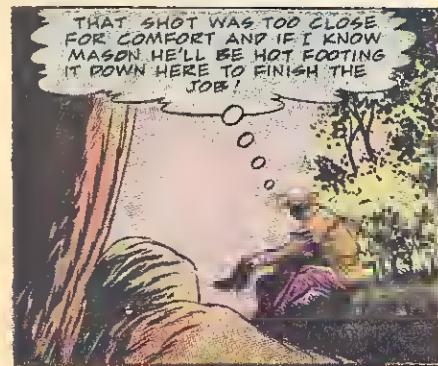
THEN ONE DAY...

GOT HIM!



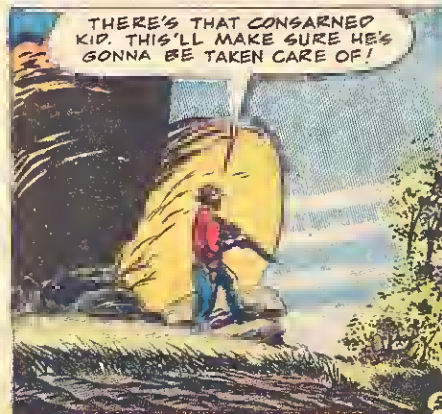
RED FIRE FAKED BEING HIT WHEN HE HEARD THE SHOT AND QUICKLY PLANNED A SCHEME TO CAPTURE MASON.

THAT SHOT WAS TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT AND IF I KNOW MASON HE'LL BE HOT FOOTING IT DOWN HERE TO FINISH THE JOB!

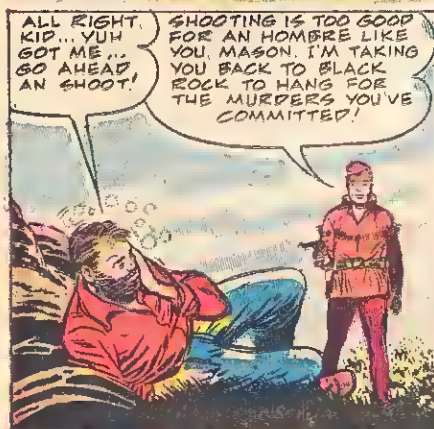
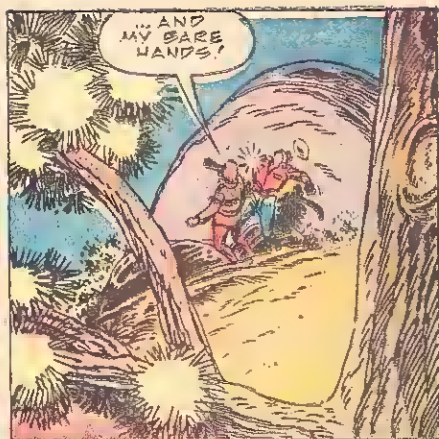
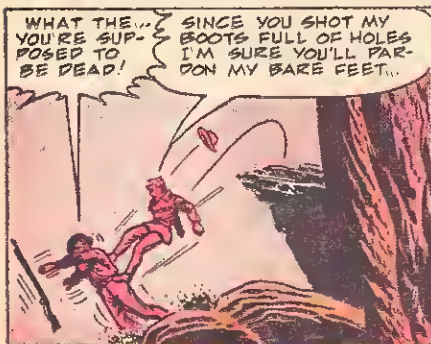


RED FIRE GUESSED RIGHT.

THERE'S THAT CONSARNED KID. THIS'LL MAKE SURE HE'S GONNA BE TAKEN CARE OF!

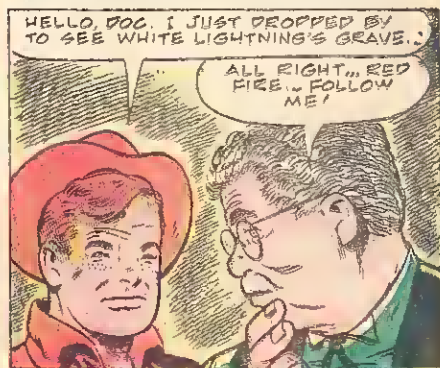


AS SOON AS TULLY MASON EMP-  
TIED HIS SLUGS INTO THE BRUSH  
AT WHAT HE FOOLISHLY THOUGHT  
WAS RED FIRE HE GOT THE SUR-  
PRISE OF HIS LIFE.



SINCE YOU SHOT MY  
BOOTS FULL OF HOLES  
I'M SURE YOU'LL PAR-  
DON MY BARE FEET...

A FEW DAYS LATER AFTER RED  
FIRE DELIVERED TULLY MASON TO  
THE SHERIFF AT BLACK ROCK...



ALL RIGHT... RED  
FIRE... FOLLOW  
ME!

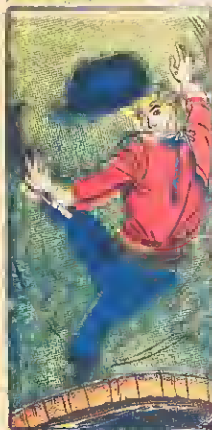
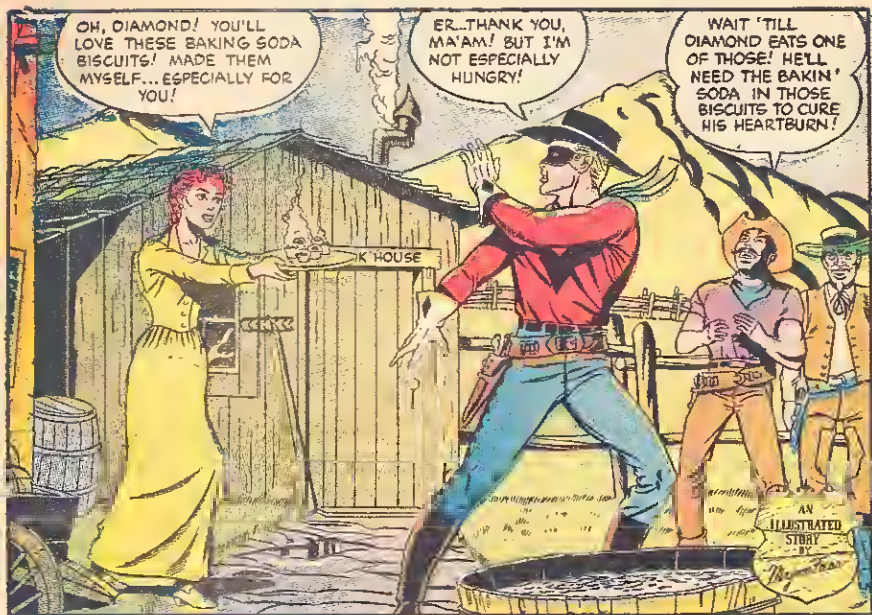


YES, BUT LUCKILY  
IT WASN'T A COM-  
PLETE FRACTURE.  
AFTER THE WAY  
YOU SAVED MY  
LIFE... I NURSED  
HIM NIGHT AND  
DAY... HE'LL LIVE!

SO... AS THE MAN IS  
BENT, THE BOY WILL  
CRY... ONLY THIS TIME  
THEY ARE TEARS OF  
HAPPINESS!

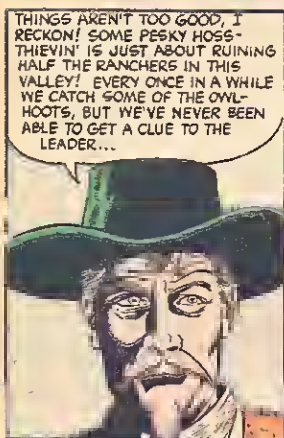
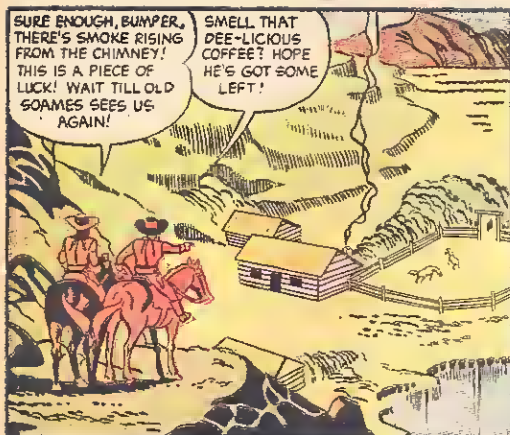




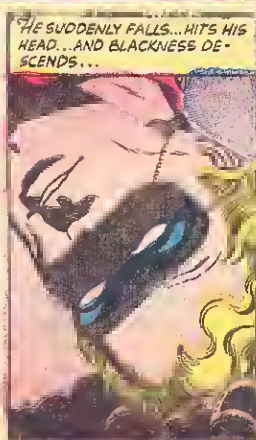
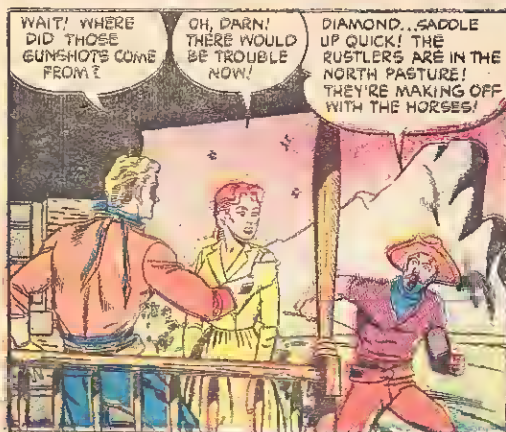


IS THIS BE THE FEARLESS BLACK DIAMOND WE SEE RUNNING AWAY...? IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE WESTERN CRIME FIGHTER WHOSE GUNS ECHO LIKE THUNDER ON THE SIDE OF JUSTICE HAS FINALLY MET HIS MATCH...? READ ON AND SEE WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES PLUNGE THE FAMOUS BACHELOR INTO A POSITION WHERE HE'D FACE A WOLF PACK OR THE WEST'S TEN WORST BADMEN, RATHER THAN SURRENDER TO THE WILES OF A ROMANTIC MINDED FEMALE TRYING TO CONVINCE HIM... HE'S...

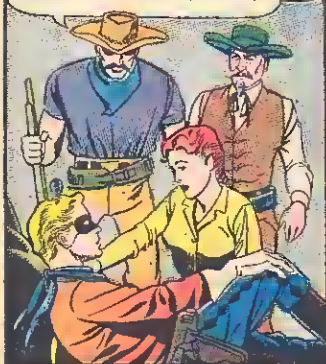
# The Marrying Kind







GREAT GULLIES, DIAMOND! WHILE YOU WERE SNOOZING, THOSE SADDLE-TRAMPS MADE OFF WITH FIFTY HEAD OF CATTLE AND FIVE HORSES!

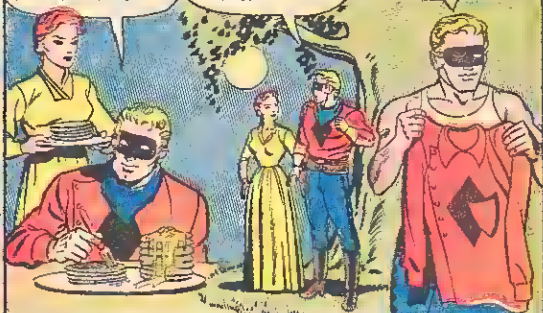


THE DAYS PASS...AND DIAMOND MAKES A DISTURBING OBSERVATION! HE'S SLOWLY BEING DRIVEN MAD BY LUCY'S UNWELCOME ATTENTIONS...

PLEASE, MISS LUCY! I'LL BUST IF I EAT ANOTHER HOTCAKE...

PLEASE, MISS LUCY! I'M TURNING IN FOR THE NIGHT! STOP TRAILING ME...

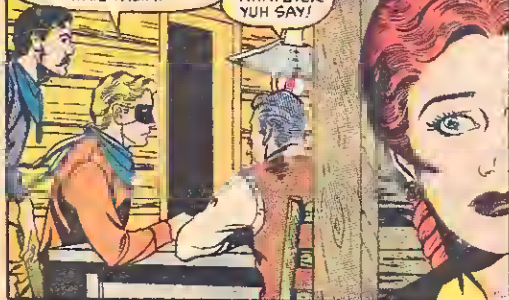
OH, NO! SHE SCORCHED MY LAST SHIRT!



ONE EVENING, HE MANAGES TO SLIP AWAY TO MAKE PLANS FOR ROUNDING UP THE RUSTLERS...GUESS WHO'S LISTENING IN INTENTLY...!

BUMPER AND I WILL RIDE AS TOP HANDS ON YOUR COLLECTED HERDS...AND THEN, IF THE RUSTLERS ATTACK, WE'LL NAIL THEM!

WHATEVER YUH SAY!



AND AS THE DAWN CUTS THROUGH THE SHADOWS OF THE LONG NIGHT, DIAMOND AND BUMPER WAIT PATIENTLY AT A NARROW MOUNTAIN PASS...

THAT GANG WILL HAVE TO COME THROUGH HERE BEFORE DAYBREAK!

THERE THEY COME! BOY, WHAT A HAUL OF OWL-HOOTS THIS'LL BE!



IT'S THE LAW! LET'S SKEDADDLE, JAKE!

TOD AND JAKE BARRETT! ROUND 'EM UP LIKE THE RUSTLING SNAKES THEY ARE!



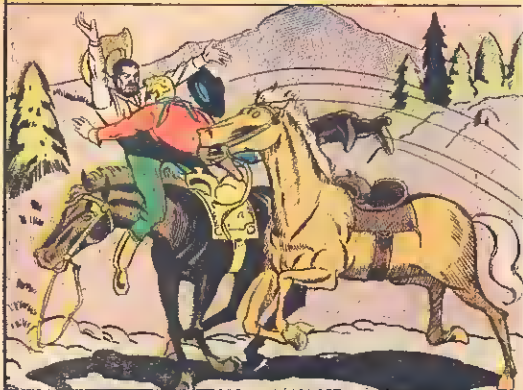
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANY PLACE, BARRETT!

DON'T TRY 'N STOP ME, IF YUH WANTA KEEP YORE HIDE AIR-TIGHT!





WITH THE AGILITY OF A DEER, THE BRAVE LAYMAN SPRINGS UPON HIS QUARRY...

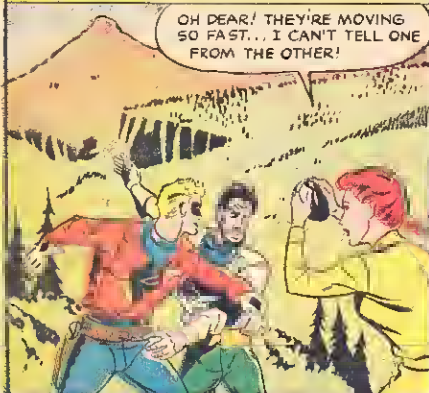


AFTER TEMPORARILY SUBDUING BARRETT, DIAMOND TURNS TO SEE LUCY...



THAT BEAST IS HURTING DIAMOND! I'VE GOT TO STOP HIM...

PICKING UP A ROCK, SHE AIMS WILDLY...



OH DEAR! THEY'RE MOVING SO FAST... I CAN'T TELL ONE FROM THE OTHER!

YOU LEAVE DIAMOND ALONE! OH, I'VE HIT THE WRONG HEAD...



THANKS, LADY! YOU JUST SAVED ME FROM GOING TO JAIL!

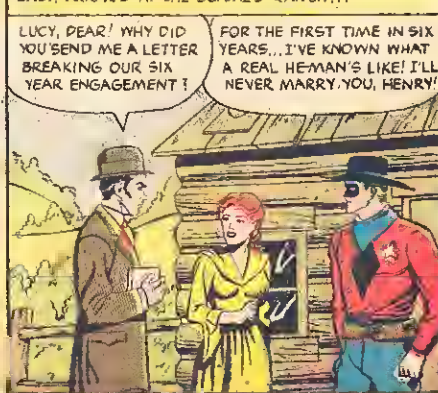
DIAMOND COMES TO... IN LUCY'S ARMS AGAIN...



NO... DON'T TELL ME WHO SLUGGED ME! I'M AFRAID I KNOW!

WELL, WE GOT MOST OF THEM... EVEN IF BARRETT DID GET AWAY!

THE NEXT DAY, A SURPRISE VISITOR FROM BACK EAST, ARRIVES AT THE SOAMES RANCH...



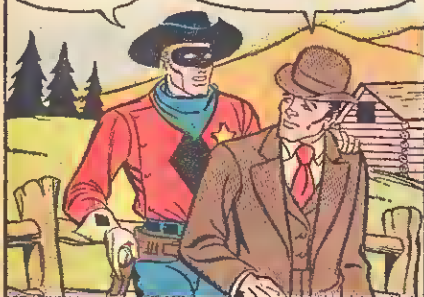
LUCY, DEAR! WHY DID YOU SEND ME A LETTER BREAKING OUR SIX YEAR ENGAGEMENT?

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SIX YEARS... I'VE KNOWN WHAT A REAL HEMAN'S LIKE! I'LL NEVER MARRY YOU, HENRY!

**BLACK DIAMOND SEIZES THE OPPORTUNITY AND CATCHES UP TO THE DEJECTED AND JILTED HENRY...**

LOOK, ARE YOU REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT MARRYING THIS GAL?

I'VE BEEN SERIOUS FOR SIX YEARS! BUT YOU HEARD... SHE WANTS A REAL WESTERN HE-MAN... LIKE YOU!



IF ONE THOUGHT YOU WERE A HERO, THAT MIGHT CHANGE HER MIND!

I GUESS IT WOULD... BUT ANYONE CAN PLAINLY SEE I'M NOT THE HERO TYPE!



I THINK I CAN FIX THAT! TOD BARRETT'S HIDING OUT IN THE HILLS! IF WE GO UP THERE AND CAPTURE HIM, BUMPER CAN CONVENIENTLY SHOW UP WITH LUCY JUST AS YOU'RE HOLDING A GUN ON THIS DESPERADO!

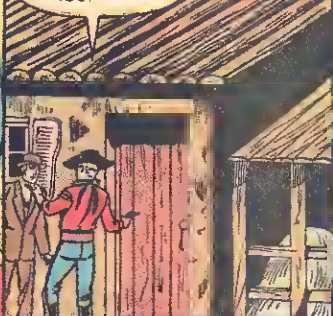
IT'S A DANDY IDEA... BUT IS IT FAIR?

IF YOU WANT TO MARRY THIS GAL... ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR!



**LATER, AT BARRETT'S HIDEOUT...**

YOU WAIT OUT HERE! I'LL DISARM HIM AND CALL YOU!



ARE YOU READY TO TANGLE WITH ME AGAIN, BARRETT?

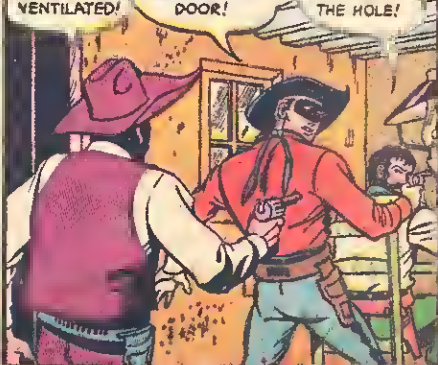
SURE, MARSHAL! ALWAYS WILLIN' TO OBLIGE...



DROP EM, DIAMOND OR GET VENTILATED!

SO YOU HAD ANOTHER RATTLER BEHIND THE DOOR!

TOD BARRETT ALWAYS HAS AN ACE IN THE HOLE!





SUDDENLY A CALM AND UNDAUNTED HENRY STEPS INTO THE PICTURE...

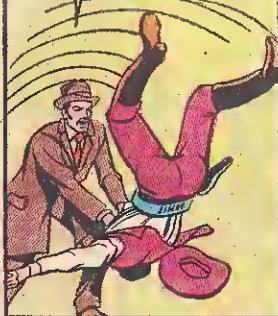
WON'T YOU PLEASE GIVE UP THAT FIREARM...?

WHY...YOU LITTLE RUNT! I'LL PULVERIZE Y...



I DETEST VIOLENCE... EXCEPT IN DIRE EMERGENCY!

OWWWW!



MY ATHLETIC CLUB WILL NEVER BELIEVE THIS...BUT WHY NOT...? AFTER ALL, I AM THE JUDO CHAMP OF BOSTON!

GET HIM AWAY FROM ME!



DIAMOND STARES IN AMAZEMENT AS HENRY GETS BARRETTIN' IN AN ARM LOCK! SUDDENLY BUMPER AND LUCY ARRIVE...

WHY, HENRY! YOU'RE FIGHTING...WITH A DANGEROUS DESPERADO!

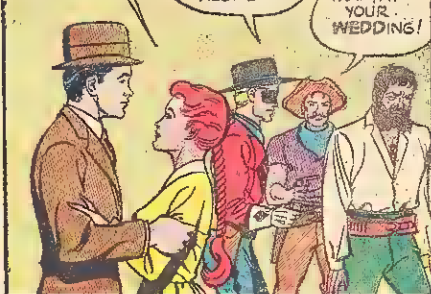
DIAMOND! MAKE THIS LOCO MAVERICK LET GO... I'LL SURRENDER!



DARLING! YOU'RE A REAL HERO...I'VE BEEN SO WRONG ABOUT YOU!

LET'S GET THESE RUSTLERS TO JAIL! AND I'M SURE THE TWO LOVEBIRDS WANT TO BE ALONE!

AND JUST AS I WAS GETTING USED TO THE IDEA OF BEING BEST MAN AT YOUR WEDDINGS!



BUMPER NEVER DID QUITE GET TO THE WEDDING...

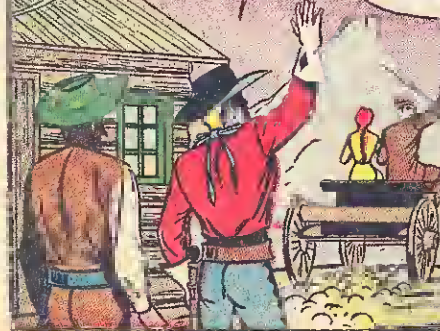
DIAMOND! HELP!

GOOD LUCK, KIDS!

WAIT FOR ME, YOU HANDSOME BRUTE! I JUST ADORE MEN WITH MUSTACHES!

DOGGONE IT, DIAMOND! LET'S GET GOING! THE FOREMAN'S DAUGHTER WANTS TO HITCH UP WITH ME!

OKAY, BUMPER! LET'S HEAD FOR THE HILLS WHILE WE'RE BOTH STILL SINGLE!



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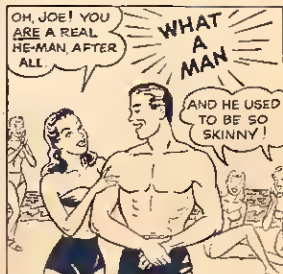
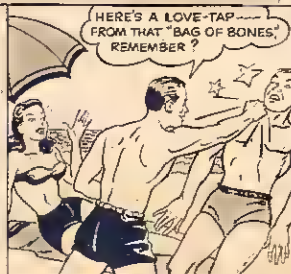
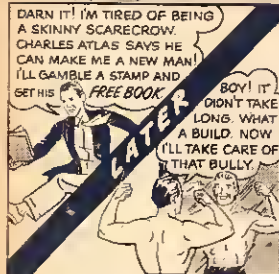
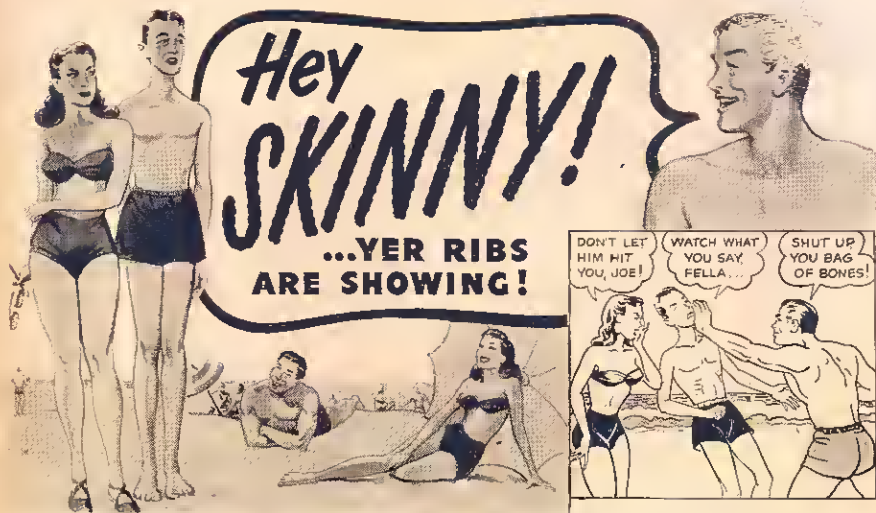
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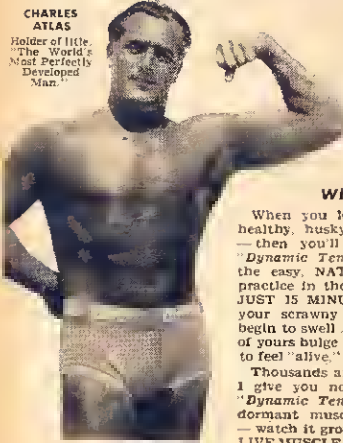
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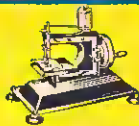
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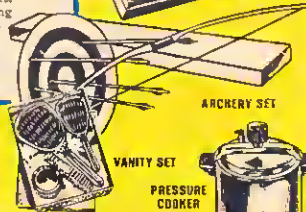
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